

MEAL PLAN VS MEAL PREP:

understanding the cost of eating habits at Elon University



Students swipe their Phoenix Cards to enter McEwen Dining Hall Aug. 23 on the first day of classes.

RYAN KUPPERMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

As the price of both university meal plans and groceries rise nationwide, students are faced with the decision of how to fill their plates

Claire Schoenfeld
Elon News Network | @clairepsch

For sophomore Caroline Baulig, the additional and often mandatory purchase of a meal plan makes the timely convenience of dining halls a monetary inconvenience.

Baulig wanted to purchase a 300 Block plan this upcoming year, but because she lives in a Colonnades

Neighborhood residence hall, she is required to purchase at least the All Access Basic Meal Plan. Despite having unlimited access to the dining halls, Baulig said she feels limited by Elon's meal plans.

She also said she wishes meal plan options were more tailorable — allowing more opportunities to cook, eat at on-campus retail locations or eat meals off campus with her friends.

"I didn't realize that where I lived hindered my ability to choose what meal plan I was getting," Baulig said. "I wish there were less constraining options — being able to be flexible and customize a meal plan ... that would be a good option."

Baulig's frustration is compounded by the rising cost of all meal plan options. The class of 2026 who purchased a meal plan this year paid 9.4% more than

the class of 2023 three years ago, according to pricing information on Elon Dining's website.

According to Elon's Assistant Vice President for News and Information Owen Covington, this accounts for rising inflation rates and food costs and higher wages for those in the dining industry, including dining hall and restaurant workers, and Elon works with Harvest Table to limit the impact of inflation on students and their families. Covington said Elon has seen an increase in meal plan rates of between 3% and 4% for four of the past five years, including the 2022-23 academic year — a percent change lower than the June 2022 annual inflation rate of 9.1%.

See **MEAL PLAN** | pg. 4

EPA advisory determines Burlington water toxic to residents

Elon professor and co-founder of Clean Haw River urges students to think about the health of surrounding community

Miranda Ferrante
Managing Editor of elonnewsnetwork.com | @ferrantemiranda

PFAS contamination in Burlington's water treatment plants and tap water reached levels higher than what the Environmental Protection Agency deems safe this June. Jessica Merricks, Pittsboro resident and Elon University professor of biology, said it was only a matter of time before Burlington —like so many other communities — saw this level of contamination.

"Burlington is not unique in this way," Merricks said. "There are communities like us that have been fighting a little bit longer, so we kind of know what the story is going to be. We know a little bit about what you have to look forward to, unfortunately."

Often called "forever chemicals," PFAS is a class of synthetic chemicals used for a variety of purposes, from military operations to the formation of products such as cosmetics, nonstick skillets and popcorn bags.

PFAS chemicals never fully break down and accumulate in the environment, animals and humans. Prolonged exposure to high concentrations of PFAS results in potential health risks, including increased cholesterol levels, high blood pressure and kidney or testicular cancer, according to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

"Everyone has it, everyone has some level of PFAS in their blood," Merricks said. "But what is most concerning are communities that not only have this baseline exposure, because of eating the popcorn bag or using the skillet, but also from consuming the drinking water, which is the case in Pittsboro and is the case in Burlington."



KYRA O'CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Water runs over a dam at Great Bend Park in Burlington, N.C. The park is part of the Haw River trail, which extends almost 80 miles.

See **WATER** | pg. 6

THE PENDULUM

A PUBLICATION OF
ELON NEWS
NETWORK

Established 1974
Volume 52, Edition 2

Elon News Network is a daily news organization that includes a newspaper, website, broadcasts and podcasts. Letters to the editor are welcome and should be typed, signed and emailed to enn@elon.edu as Word documents. ENN reserves the right to edit obscene and potentially libelous material. Lengthy letters may be trimmed to fit. All submissions become the property of ENN and will not be returned.

KYRA O'CONNOR
Executive Director of Elon News Network

SOPHIE ROSENTHAL
Managing Editor of The Pendulum

MIRANDA FERRANTE
Managing Editor of elonnewsnetwork.com

ELLIS CHANDLER
Executive Producer of Elon Local News

CHLOE FRANKLIN
Executive Producer of ELN Morning

ERIN MARTIN
Executive Producer of ENN On Air

MADALYN HOWARD
Chief Copy Editor

CAROLINE MITCHELL
Design Chief

AVERY SLOAN
Politics Director

MASON WILLET
Sports Director

ABBY SHAMBLIN
Analytics Director

ANNA TOPFL
Social Media Coordinator

Abigail Hobbs and Ryan Kupperman contributed to the copy editing of this edition.

EDITORIAL POLICY:

ENN seeks to inspire, entertain and inform the Elon community by providing a voice for students and faculty, as well as serve as a forum for the meaningful exchange of ideas.

CORRECTIONS POLICY:

ENN is committed to accurate coverage. When factual errors are made, we correct them promptly and in full, both online and in print. Online corrections state the error and the change at the top of the article. Corrections from the previous week's print edition appear on this page.

Contact
corrections@elonnewsnetwork.com
to report a correction or a concern.

WHEN WE PUBLISH:

The Pendulum
publishes weekly on Wednesdays

Elon Local News
broadcasts Mondays at 6 p.m.

ELN Morning
broadcasts Thursdays at 10 a.m.

ENN On Air
broadcasts Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m.

elonnewsnetwork.com
publishes daily

CORRECTIONS

There are no corrections from the last edition of The Pendulum.

CHEAT SHEET

THE CHEAT SHEET IS AN INTERVIEW WITH A RELEVANT EXPERT TO EXPLAIN COMPLEX TOPICS

Q&A with Police Chief Joe LeMire



ANNEMARIE BONNER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon University Police Chief Joe LeMire in his office.

As the academic year begins, campus police is making improvements to enhance safety on and off campus.

Annemarie Bonner
Elon News Network | [@ABonnerNews](https://twitter.com/ABonnerNews)

Campus Police Chief Joe LeMire discussed safety for the school year, changes made to the department and the biggest concerns for the new academic year. He discussed changes made due to recent mass shootings across the country and staffing shortages among several police departments. Some of the improvements include new equipment, new officers, and delegating liaisons for campus neighborhoods to talk to students about topics such as a sexual assault.



Joe LeMire

What improvements were made over the summer to improve student safety?

“The number one improvement we had was just staffing alone. So across the country, everybody sees the stories of police departments and cities and other areas that staffing is down sometimes — anywhere from 20 to 40%. We were the same way. We’re budgeted for 20 officers. And when I got here in March of ‘21, we had 12. We are at this point today: fully staffed. We were able to hire some brand new employees, some people with some experience and even a few people with 25 years of experience in that group of people.

Two of the people we hired are both rapid response instructors for the state of North Carolina. So, we’re going to do our own internal training as it relates to active shooter active violence. We also had some budget money available where we bought the appropriate equipment that we would need.”

Because of recent national events, do you feel like Elon is a safe campus?

“Elon as a town is a very safe area. In fact, I think I read the article where

they were voted No. 1, for five years in a row, the safest town in North Carolina. But as I said in my presentation to parents, I said, ‘You never want students to fall into that false sense of complacency that we’re safe, and we don’t need to take appropriate steps to keep ourselves safe.’

Last year and over the summer, some of the things that have been happening are stolen vehicles and thefts from vehicles. We’ve got people coming into our area — Burlington, Elon, and some other areas — and what’s happening is, especially with students, a lot of people feel it’s a safe area. A lot of cars drive by fob. Well, people will just throw the fob somewhere in the car.

People are going around and pulling on door handles until they find one that’s open, getting in the car, pressing the brake and hitting the button. If the car starts, they steal it. So we’ve had an incident over the summer where we had, like, seven cars stolen in one night. And I think the bulk of them are all students that lived off campus. It wasn’t happening on campus, but nearby obviously. So we’re trying to get that word out to people that that’s the safety component.”

What is the main concern for this year?

“I’ve learned in higher education in the last 14 years that some of the biggest crimes you see on campus are theft. If you put thousands of people in one area, what are you’re going to see if you go to a campus, you’re going to find a lot of electronics.

You’re going to find a lot of laptops, a lot of computers, a lot of cell phones, a lot of stuff like that. People gravitate to an area where you might be able to steal stuff like that.”

Are there other concerns as the school year starts?

“One of the things we’re working on as a department is a sensitive crimes team. We hired two more female officers this past year, and they’re really getting involved in sensitive crimes, and sexual assaults and things like that. So these first months of school, especially for freshmen, is the riskiest time for sexual assault and things of that nature.

So we want to have that focus out there. We’re putting in some resources together to have presentations on sexual assault and sexual violence interpersonal violence, that type of stuff.”

How do you plan to educate students this year?

“We’ve put information out twice, I think, in the last 12 months about cars and locking your doors and things like that, but it’s getting people to actually read it and then take the action. People like convenience, so they’ll leave a key in the car until it actually impacts them.

So it’s a lot of email and education that way the sexual assault piece we plan to do through those liaisons in the neighborhoods and meeting people face to face and having those conversations. We do a lot of work with student groups and student organizations where we’re partnering and having these conversation sessions.”

What do you say to students who say they’re not concerned because Elon is a safe campus?

“It’s not 100% safe. There’s no place in the world that is 100% safe, and that’s not a comment you can make at the second you’re victimized or hurt in some way, or your friend is hurt in some way.

You don’t want that to be when you realize, ‘Oh my God, it’s not 100% safe.’ Take this information now and just practice those safety habits that we talk about, and you can get to even a higher level of safety.”

What else do you want students to know as the academic year begins?

“There’s two big things. Rave Mobile Safety technology is the company we use for our eAlerts emails, texts and all that. We’re trying to get all students to get their cell phone into their OnTrack account. There’s a combination of two things happening. Some are not putting their cell phone in there, or some are putting their mom and dad’s cell phone in there. Make sure it’s yours, because every night, that downloads to the system. And when we push out an emergency message, that’s who it’s going to go to — whatever cell phone text message to that number.

On top of that, we moved on from LiveSafe. We’re now with Rave Guardian. They can download that at the app store, associate yourself with Elon University, and you can do text messaging with the police department emergency calls. We’ve got a call directory in there for you for all local law enforcement and the hospital. And you can do some virtual safe walks and things like that to keep yourself safe.”



Nancy Wilkins, a feature twirler for the Fire of the Carolinas holds her baton high in the air as the band performs near Fonville Fountain on Aug. 19.

GRAYSEN SHIRLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Two freshmen sign the Elon University Honor Code Aug. 22 as the class of 2026 began its Elon experience. The Honor Code signing followed the Call to Honor ceremony, which was held inside Alumni Gym.

JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



ELLIS CHANDLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon University President Connie Book addresses the class of 2026, transfer students and the Elon community during New Student Convocation on Aug. 20. Book reassured families saying goodbye to their students, asserting that Elon is a welcoming place.



Students sitting in the front row of New Student Convocation participated in President Connie Book's human bar graph. With the activity, Book referenced this year's common reading, "Factfulness," and the overwhelming positivity in the world.

ELLIS CHANDLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Students reconsider meal plans amid rising campus dining costs

MEAL PLAN | from cover

Elon has a two-year on-campus residency requirement for all students unless given an exemption from Residence Life. The two-year requirement to live on campus also comes with a two-year requirement to eat on campus.

Covington wrote in a statement to Elon News Network that these requirements give students a residential campus experience — a foundation of the overall Elon experience.

“Being a residential campus means that students’ intellectual and personal development are woven seamlessly into the classroom and residential environments, including dining facilities,” Covington wrote. “University programs and facilities are designed to meet the developmental needs of students

as they progress through their four years at Elon.”

In dining halls, students are given access to a variety of stations that can cater to different dietary needs and restrictions. According to the Elon Dining Website, dining hall meals are made with “responsibly sourced” ingredients, 20% of which are grown, harvested or produced within 150 miles of campus and contain no “artificial ingredients, additives or synthetic chemicals.” Additionally, all students who are on a meal plan have a minimum of \$150 annual food dollars they can spend at on-campus retail locations.

According to the nonprofit education news outlet The Hechinger Report, the cost of groceries for a college student averages at \$260 per month, or \$3.10 per meal. The report also highlights that the cost of eating out as a college student averages

“

I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT WHERE I LIVED HINDERED MY ABILITY TO CHOOSE WHAT MEAL PLAN I WAS GETTING. I WISH THERE WERE LESS CONSTRAINING OPTIONS - BEING ABLE TO BE FLEXIBLE AND CUSTOMIZE A MEAL PLAN... THAT WOULD BE A GOOD OPTION.

CAROLINE BAULIG
SOPHOMORE

\$342 per month and a campus meal plan averages \$563 per month. Students may also have to factor in other expenses such as gas and kitchen supplies into their overall grocery budget.

For other students like junior Nolan Schreiner, the cost alone made purchasing a dining plan not worth it, even with the additional factors that go in to grocery shopping. Schreiner, who currently lives in an on-campus apartment, decided to not purchase a meal plan after calculating each meal on the Block 300 Plan is worth roughly \$14.50.

“I could make a meal for less money, so why would I be paying \$14.50 to have a set number of meals?” Schreiner said. “To me, it just made no sense.”

Schreiner said without a meal plan, he chooses to cook his meals at home or go out to eat. Baulig, however, does not have

that convenience.

“I basically have to spend all of my time eating on campus in the dining halls, which isn’t exactly my favorite,” Baulig said. “Especially since most of my friends probably won’t be going to the dining halls.”

Meal Plans

All Access

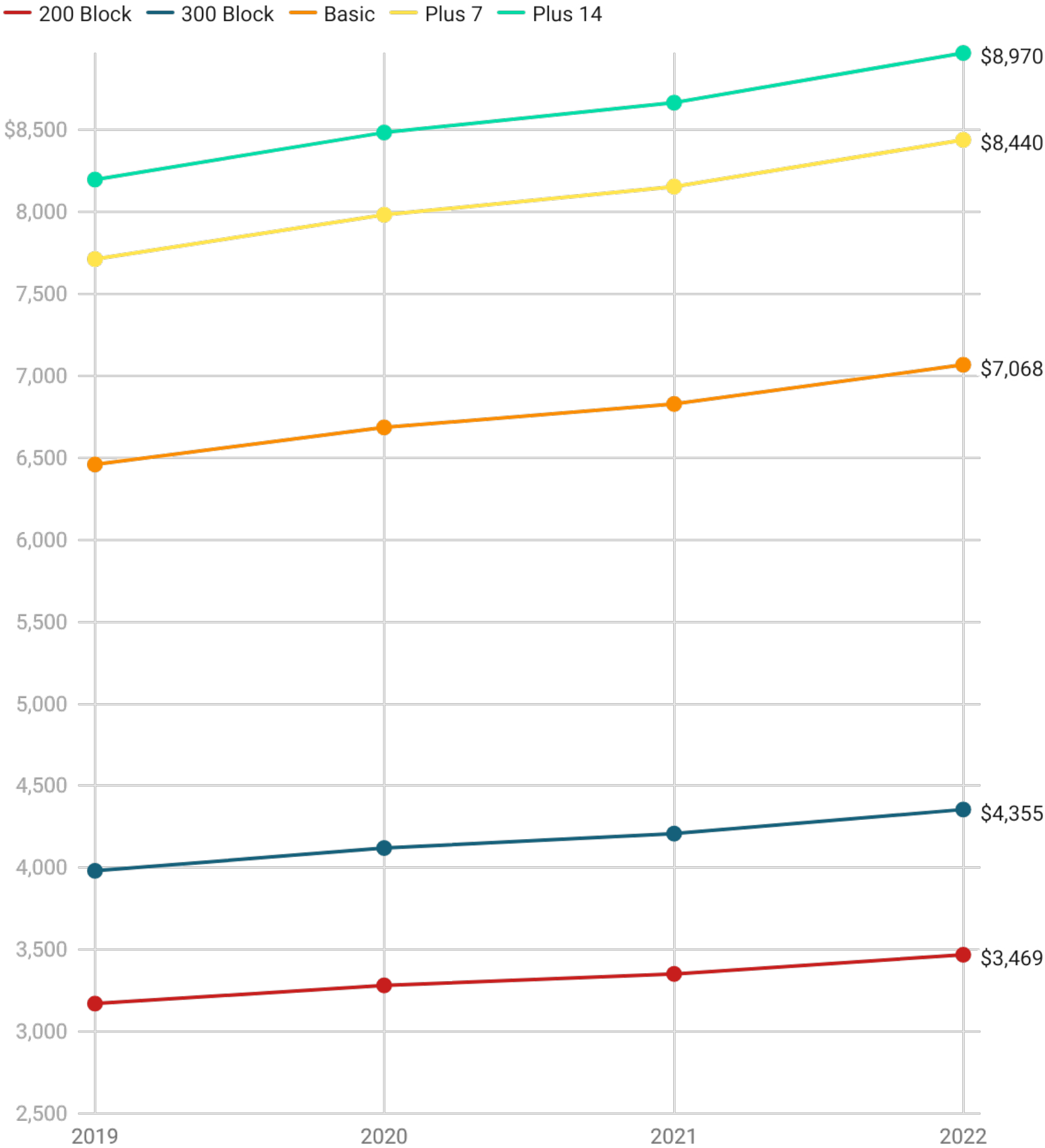
Required for freshman and sophomores living in residence halls and greek housing.

Block

Only available to sophomore students living in university apartments and upperclassman.

Elon University annual meal plan prices, 2019-2022

Elon News Network calculated Elon University’s meal plan price increases from 2019-2022; meal plan prices increase by an average of 3% each year.



Elon community disappointed with Mediterranean Deli closure

Professors and students on campus shared how the restaurant closing will decrease options, especially for those with dietary restrictions

Sophie Rosenthal
Managing Editor of The Pendulum | @sophrosenthal



CHLOE STUART
JUNIOR

KYRA O'CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

"It's the only good place to get Mediterranean food in like 30 minutes around the area, which is upsetting to me. I'm personally just scorned, I'm upset. I'm confused."



ALEX CHADWICK
JUNIOR

KYRA O'CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

"There are hardly any vegetarian options on campus and I'm a vegetarian ... We lived in Oaks so it was super convenient because Clohan is like a 20 minute walk."



ALLISON BLOCK
JUNIOR

RYAN KUPPERMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

"I always felt like I heard that people enjoyed it, and it was good. I was kind of shocked to hear that it was permanently closing."



AILISH O'BRIEN
FRESHMAN

RYAN KUPPERMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

"I heard about it, but I never got to eat there or anything like that. A little upset because I love Mediterranean food and that would have been nice. It would have been a good place to have lunch."

For the past four years, professor of Arabic Shereen Elgamal enjoyed taking her students to Mediterranean Deli in downtown Elon to try different Middle Eastern cuisines and practice their Arabic.

That all changed Aug. 18, when a sign was posted in the window of Mediterranean Deli announcing the town of Elon location of the restaurant would be closing permanently.

"At a personal, professional and actually kind of a campus-wide level, it was quite a bit of a disappointment," Elgamal said.

Located on the ground floor of Park Place, Mediterranean Deli — often called Med Deli — served salads, spreads, baked goods and sandwiches. The restaurant opened in 2018 with an invitation from the university. Mediterranean Deli's other location in Chapel Hill will remain open.

The reason for the closure is unknown, and Mediterranean Deli owner Jamil Kadoura was not available for comment.

"We appreciate the years of support that you have given us, and everyone is welcome at our Chapel Hill location," the sign in the window said.

University spokesman Owen Covington said Park Place was developed in partnership with Elon University, but the university does not own the building. Instead, it leases the land to the building owner. Because of this, Covington said, the university does not have a direct relationship with Mediterranean Deli regarding its operation of the retail restaurant or its lease of the space, but he said the deli did provide catering services to university clients at times.

"Elon contracts with the building owner to provide management and maintenance services for the residential units on the upper floors, which are used by Elon students and managed by Elon's Office of Residence Life," Covington said.

Park Place declined to comment on the closure at this time.

Elgamal said she's disappointed to be losing the deli's cuisines represented in the town of Elon.

"I think it was a very nice outlet for our campus," Elgamal said. "Simply Thai, for example, represents Thai food, and I thought having something from the Middle East would be nice for students to experiment with a variety of foods, different cuisines, different cultures and so on and so forth."

Professor of performing arts Kim Shively texted professor of performing arts Susanne Shawyer as soon as she heard that Mediterranean Deli closed.

"I'm incredibly sad," Shively said. "And it's going to be a real loss for our community."

The two professors agreed with Elgamal about losing Mediterranean representation in the town of Elon and added that the deli provided options for people with dietary restrictions on campus.

"A lot of faculty who are gluten free or vegan really appreciated the options at Med Deli," Shawyer said. "If we also had a guest artist or somebody visiting, it was always great with anyone who needed those options in

their dining, but maybe we wanted to have a conversation, rather than going to Clohan, which can be a little noisy."

For Director of Jewish Life Betsy Polk, options for dietary restrictions were a part of the appeal of Mediterranean Deli. The closure of the location was disappointing for Hillel, Polk said, which often had events catered by Mediterranean Deli.

"We have to focus on what kinds of foods we can make available that are kosher friendly and are kosher, and Med Deli was a great partner in being there for us in that way," Polk said.

Shively and Shawyer liked that the deli was locally run, and they hope that another local business will fill the empty location in Park Place, rather than a chain.

"We like to see the local businesses thrive," Shawyer said. "Personally, I'd much rather have local businesses, rather than chains, up to support on campus, and it was a great option. So we're a little sad."

Though Elgamal liked the convenience of the downtown Elon location for her students, as a Durham



WILLIE WHEALEN
ASSISTANT VOLLEYBALL COACH

RYAN KUPPERMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

"Place was awesome. I'm a vegetarian, so it was always easy to find some good food in there. I'm a big deli fan, so snacks and stuff, take it home, eat it the next day. I was bummed to hear that they shut down, for sure."



SHAUN GOODMAN
SENIOR

RYAN KUPPERMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

"I'm devastated. It was authentic. It felt like you were transported to Greece."



WIIM ROETS
JUNIOR

RYAN KUPPERMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

"I ate there twice. The second time was the only good experience, the first time I didn't very much enjoy the food."



GRACE GOGGINS
SOPHOMORE

RYAN KUPPERMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

"I didn't go there a lot but it's definitely sad because it was a different variety of food that we have on campus. It's kind of disappointing but I don't think it's gonna affect my life very much."



WE LIKE TO SEE THE LOCAL BUSINESSES THRIVE. PERSONALLY, I'D MUCH RATHER HAVE LOCAL BUSINESSES RATHER THAN CHAINS UP TO SUPPORT ON CAMPUS, AND IT WAS A GREAT OPTION. SO WE'RE A LITTLE SAD.

SUSANNE SHAWYER
PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSOR

resident, she has been and will continue visiting the Chapel Hill location with her family. As for her Arabic classes, she said if she could plan a big trip with student volunteers to drive one another, Elgamal said she would consider bringing her students to the Chapel Hill location to continue the class tradition.

If not, she said, her own house is open for her students to enjoy Middle Eastern cuisines.

"We also have a tradition that my students come to my house and cook with me once a semester," Elgamal said. "Maybe we'll have to make this twice a semester, so that we can again, cook and taste the food and at the same time visit a house environment from the Middle East."

“Forever chemicals” pose health risks, community concern

WATER | from cover

The EPA drastically lowered its health advisory from 70 parts per trillion over a 70-year life span for PFOS and PFOA — two PFAS chemicals — to .02 part of PFOS per trillion and .004 parts of PFOA per trillion. This is equivalent to the consumption of less than one droplet of water in an Olympic-sized swimming pool over the course of 70 years.

The EPA wants the limits to be as close as possible to zero to show how toxic these compounds are, according to Harvard School of Public Health.

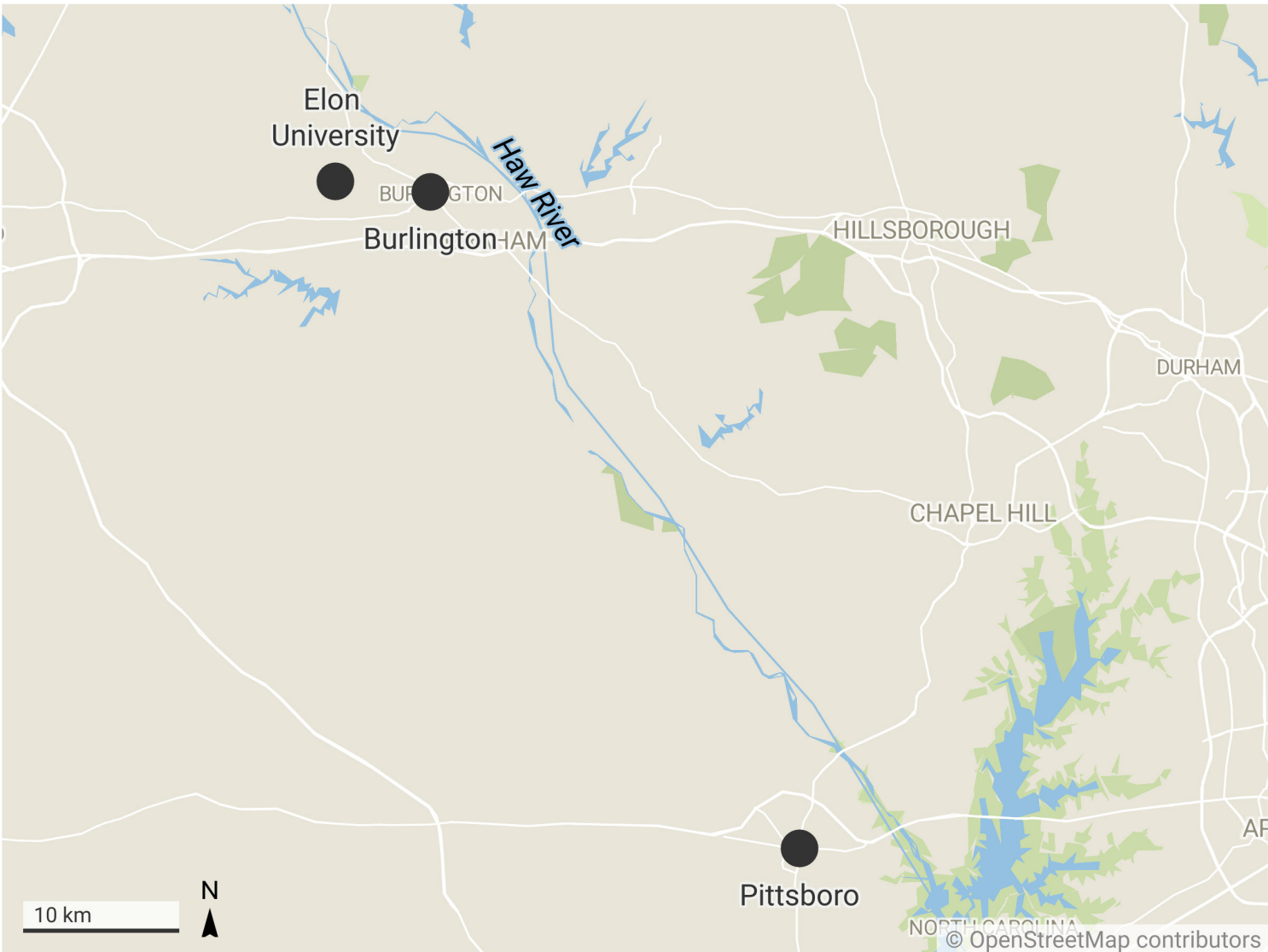
According to the city of Burlington, the average combined PFOS and PFOA in drinking water from Burlington’s JD Mackintosh Water Treatment Plant is 3.16 parts per trillion. The average from Burlington’s Ed Thomas Water Treatment Plant is 20 parts per trillion.

Merricks and microbiologist Katie Bryant are co-founders of Clean Haw River, a group of Pittsboro-based activists dedicated to protecting local water sources from industrial waste. The pair said they partnered two years ago to educate their community about the danger of PFAS pollution.

“The biggest benefit I think for myself coming to Pittsboro with a science background is understanding when something’s urgent,” Bryant said. “And the rest of the community just brushes it off, I think for some because they didn’t understand it. I think also they didn’t want to acknowledge it. It’s scary. It’s not fun ... and she and I met thankfully and formed and decided we’re just going to start telling the public since nobody else wants to.”

For at least two years, Merricks and Bryant have waited for guidance from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine highlighting the dangers of PFAS exposure. A NASEM report released in July confirmed the level of risk. Merricks said this guidance is especially important to educate physicians in the healthcare community so they can offer better clinical treatment to those at highest risk.

“I want to iterate that this is not something we’ve known before, not something that’s been articulated in this way — and we’ve known about these compounds for decades and decades,” Merricks said. “Finally now, the conversation is becoming more serious, and people are able to look at the types of health concerns that they have and start



A map marking the cities of Burlington and Pittsboro on the Haw River. PFAS pollutants are discharged into the river, leading to dangerous long-term exposure for communities who use the river as a water supply.

to potentially make connections to their exposure.”

Bryant called the NASEM report “alarming” in its implications for residents of the Burlington community.

“Every system you learn about — your nervous system, your cardiovascular system, your fat metabolism, your digestive system, your reproductive system — it impacts every single system, which is crazy,” Bryant said. “There’s very few things that do that, and it’s because of how persistent it is. It doesn’t go away.”

Merricks said their organization can serve as a resource for both students and the surrounding community. She encouraged Elon students to educate themselves about PFAS pollution in their

home states, regardless of their proximity to Burlington or Pittsboro.

“Everyone at this point should be thinking about this,” Merricks said. “Wherever we’re ingesting water is where we need to be concerned.”

When living on campus, Merricks said students are at a high risk of exposure when taking very hot showers or filling up tea kettles with tap water. This is because unlike bacteria or viruses, boiling water does not get rid of PFAS. Rather, it increases the chemical concentration, making water more toxic.

One of Elon University’s missions is to teach students what it means to be an engaged citizen, and Merricks believes it’s important students know and understand

what is going on in the community that surrounds them. Even if Elon students are buying bottled water and are not cooking with it, Merricks said there are thousands of people in Burlington who are.

“That is really important from my perspective as an Elon faculty member, that our students understand that it’s not just your health we need to be thinking about,” Merricks said. “It’s Burlington’s health, it’s Pittsboro’s health, because we are right down the river from you.”

Both Merricks and Bryant believe education and awareness in communities like Pittsboro and Burlington are crucial. Merricks said Elon’s campus does not equate to the “real world” students will enter after graduation.

“We are surrounded by a community that is desperately in need of this type of education,” Merricks said. “We are primed to give them an education, we are primed to contribute to that conversation so that people can know what to do and who to talk to and what noise to make, because that at the end of the day is what brings forth change ... I’m not going to put my family at risk a day longer.”

BY THE NUMBERS

3.16

parts per trillion is the average combined PFOS and PFOA in drinking water from Burlington’s JD Mackintosh Water Treatment Plant, according to the city of Burlington.

BY THE NUMBERS

20

parts per trillion is the average combined PFOS and PFOA in drinking from Burlington’s Ed Thomas Water Treatment Plant, according to the city of Burlington.



Litter and trash float on the surface of the Haw River at Great Bend Park in Burlington. Plastic containers and bottle can include PFAS, the chemical affecting water in Pittsboro.

KYRA O’CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

LIFESTYLE

Classroom Collection Campaign school supplies ready for pickup

25,000 supplies collected for 3,000 ABSS families

Margaret Faust
Elon News Network | @MargaretFaust5

Alamance-Burlington School System social workers and families in need can pick up school supplies and hygiene products before school starts on Aug. 29. All of the items were donated through the sixth annual Classroom Collection Campaign hosted in conjunction with ABSS and the Alamance Chamber.

The drive ended on Aug. 8 and 25,000 individual items were donated. These items include, backpacks, binders, pencils, calculators, deodorant and shampoo. Last year, the supplies collected during this drive were used by 3,000 families.

More than half the students in ABSS schools receive free or reduced breakfast and lunch, and ABSS Lead Social Worker Kim Yarborough said when students have the supplies they need, they will be successful.

“So when the child walks through that door, part of feeling like you belong to that school is being prepared,” Yarborough said. “Coming in with your items ready to go where you don’t have to borrow from a neighbor, that you

have your own things.”

Volunteers spent last week sorting through donations and arranging them in a supply closet at Sellars-Gunn Education Center. Yarborough said there are plenty of pens, pencils, glue sticks and spiral notebooks. Scissors, composition books and backpacks go quickly for high school students, and Yarborough said the school system always needs earbuds and flash drives, especially for high school students who often do school work on their computers.

The next step is for social workers and families to come to the closet and pick up what they need. Yarborough said this process can be emotional for families and is kept confidential.

“We want to make sure that we appreciate the dignity and worth of students and families,” Yarborough said. “We make sure these supplies are given in a discrete way so that no child feels bad about having to ask for school supplies from a school social worker.”

She said families who use these supplies are appreciative. Once, a family wrote her a thank you note after she gave them some of the donated items.

“I mean it warms my heart,” Yarborough said. “It truly, truly does because, again, our goal as school social workers is to make sure what we are supporting and



GRAYSEN SHIRLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Alamance Arts is one of many public drop sites for the school supply drive for the Alamance-Burlington School System.

being that liaison and providing families for the resources that they need.”

The supplies were donated at public drop sites at more than 20 businesses throughout the county. Plus, employers had internal drives among their employees to collect donations.

President and CEO of the Alamance Chamber Reagan Gural

said this drive strengthens the relationship between schools and businesses.

“Our schools are teaching our upcoming workforce,” Gural said. “So for the business community, it is very important that we are ensuring that our children are prepared for the workplace or prepared for their next step after high school.”

The response from the business community about the drive has been positive, according to Gural.

Families who need school supplies can connect with their school social worker for more information. The campaign is still accepting monetary donations. That money will be used to buy whatever supplies weren’t donated during the drive.

ADVERTISEMENT

ELON NEWS NETWORK

FIND MORE ONLINE
CONTENT AT
ELONNEWSNETWORK.COM

FOLLOW US ON
SOCIAL MEDIA



@ELONNEWSNETWORK

FIND US IN THE PAUL PARSONS NEWSROOM
MCEWEN 108

Fit Check. Textbooks, Check.

Start your 6-month trial.

amazon.com/joinstudent

prime student

